

HID TREASURE.

It is possible that you may have lived a long life in poverty, while yet you were every day close upon immense riches. It is possible that you may have walked over the field where treasure lay hid, and have hardened the ground by the tread of your feet, without being aware that you were at the very door of wealth. You may have been within reach of the Sabbath bell, which said "Come, come," in your ear, inviting you to the sanctuary where Christ was preached; you may have even sat under a gospel ministry; and, no doubt, you have had the Bible within your grasp—that Bible which speaks every one of its words to you.

There is a parable of our Lord's which runs thus:—
"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." (Matt. xiii. 44).

This parable may concern you, friends and fellow-sinners. It shews how souls get the treasure of the kingdom of heaven by getting acquainted with the King.

1. *The man finding hid treasure represents an awakened sinner.* You are to picture to yourselves the following occurrence:—A man gets a field or a farm on lease, and diligently sets about cultivating it. His head, as well as his hands, is full of his field. He knows of

no riches but what may come to him from the produce of these acres, if well wrought; and so he ploughs, sows, harrows—attends, in short, to every process in its season. One day, while thus busy, lo! his plough or his harrow strikes on something hard—a large flat stone, which is somewhat shoved from its place. As he is stooping down to see if his plough has got no injury, he espies beneath the stone, at a clink, something glittering; and, on closer inspection, this proves to be silver!—gold! He wonders, and stands rapt in thought a while—a new way of reaching the goal of riches has occurred to him. Without waiting for the produce of his fields, *this treasure*—this unexpected, unthought-of treasure—may become his wealth! “Ah, then,” says he, “let me get the field as my own! Oh, if it were altogether mine!”

Here, in a parable, you see a man plodding at his worldly calling, day by day, year after year—rising early, working late. He thinks, “I would be happy if only I could get and lay by so much money!” Up to old age this may go on—the man still thinking that happiness is to be reached by what his trade or business brings in. When some prosperous season comes, how diligent! how anxious! how persevering! But all the while he thinks not that there is bliss of another sort for him.

Some day, in the good providence of God, this very man is led to hear and reflect upon things unseen. The Holy Spirit causes a verse, or a word, of Scripture, to arrest his attention—as when “*unsearchable riches of Christ*” made one who before was easy-minded start with surprise, and begin to inquire what in Christ was

"unsearchable." A ray has shone in. A new idea is shot into his soul, drawing the man to think of God, from whom it came. Or perhaps it is a providential event that arouses him—some friend's death, or some sudden stroke carrying away a neighbour. Or else a long-forgotten truth rises to view on a sick-bed; as when Lady Glenorchy began to recall the truth—"*Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.*" This is the plough hitting on the stone, that discloses a glimpse of the Treasure. Or it may be like Luke Short, of whom Mr. Flavel tells us. The old man was sitting lolling in the sun, musing over his youth, when a sermon and a blessing, uttered eighty years ago, flash on his soul, and he saw all things in a new light.

Here surely the man has got a new thought, and it may turn out a treasure. There is another world; glimpses of it, and glimpses of blessedness to be attained from thence, have been obtained. Still, the man says little about it to any. He "hides" the treasure, afraid of being laughed at, and perhaps laughed out of it, and scarcely yet quite sure himself if all this be reality.

2. *The Hid Treasure is Christ the Saviour.*—He is little known to the world, little thought upon, seen by few, and so is spoken of as "hid in a field." But though *hidden* in this sense, the field wherein he is hid is not far off: you are walking over it daily. Unclasp that Bible, open it out, read its pages—and in so doing you are almost touching the Treasure. Go to the house of God, listen to a minister who tells of Christ, understand what he says—and you are almost touching the Treasure. "The word is nigh thee, the word of faith which we

preach." (Rom. x. 8). It is very nigh; but you may be unaware of its presence. You may be treating the gospel as a child often does a nut—playing with the shell, and never breaking into the savoury kernel.

But Christ, to them who know Him, is truly *treasure*. He is God-man in His person—really God and really man in one person; and hence all fulness dwells in Him. There is an infinite treasure there of perfection—whatever in God is glorious, whatever is generous, whatever is gracious, and whatever in man is suitable for pouring out affection, as well as fit for exhibiting holy obedience. And this wondrous Person obeyed the law which we disobeyed, and gave His meritorious suffering unto death, to pay our last mite of punishment. Is He not, then, a *Treasure*? Here are the riches a soul needs in its dealings with God. Here is merit for you, here is ransom-money, here is righteousness.

If a true friend is truly a *treasure*, Christ is so to all who know Him. Jonathan was a treasure to David—a friend ready for fellowship, with a bosom open to receive David's cares, joys, anxieties, thoughts, hopes, fears, wishes, affection. Such is *Christ*. Pour into His ear every sorrow, care, fear, as well as every joy, and all your soul's affections. Your heart will meet with sympathy there. He listens, and is never weary; He speaks a word in season to you when weary; He careth for your every care; He thinketh on you; He feels to the very soul.

He has yet to open out all His *Treasure*. We know it but in part. He gives His own hereafter a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory, a palm

of victory, a white robe, a golden harp, hidden manna, a white stone whereon is written a new name; and He places them in the glory of His kingdom, close to Himself. At His coming again, He gives them a glorious resurrection-body, which never shall feel weakness, or pain, or weariness; and He shews them all the endless magnificence of New Jerusalem and His kingdom, telling them that all is *theirs*, for they are Christ's—joint-heirs with Christ, the heir of all things! And to sum up all, they shall be “like Him,” in the image of God, perfectly and for ever holy.

What treasure! And it is lying ready for you—waiting your coming to find it!

3. *The man selling all and buying the field represents the awakened sinner parting with all, that he may win Christ.*—In the parable you may suppose the anxious discoverer of the treasure in the field planning night and day how to purchase the field, and make it his own personal property. Where is he to get money enough? He inquires, and finds the price such that he can meet it only by parting with all his present goods and chattels—he must sell his furniture, and even his clothes. If he does this, then he may make out the purchase-money. Now, he is loath to do this—it is difficult for him to make up his mind to part with that article, which is a family-piece, and that other, which is a gift from a dear friend. But, though many difficulties occur, the joyful hope of being enriched by that treasure prevails—he parts with everything he has that he may raise the purchase-money: and the *field with all its unknown treasure* is his own! And now, in the quiet of evening, he repairs to the field, and surveys his immense gain.

Whether his farm yield much or little, is to him now a small matter—he has *other riches*—he has *better treasure*!

It is thus with the anxious soul that has got a glimpse of something better than earth, and would fain possess it. The hoped-for joy therein is ever flitting before his eye; but there are hindrances in his way. The natural love of this world's objects suggests a caution, "Will you really renounce this world as your portion?" The love of self, too, hinders the man from listening to the proposal to give up all he has, and buy the field. He has regard for his own fancied righteousness, strict walk, regularity of conduct, decency, morality. He suspects, too, that he must not only part with all he has, but that he must, in addition, obtain something valuable, such as deep feeling of love, and bitter sense of past folly, and strong hatred of sin.

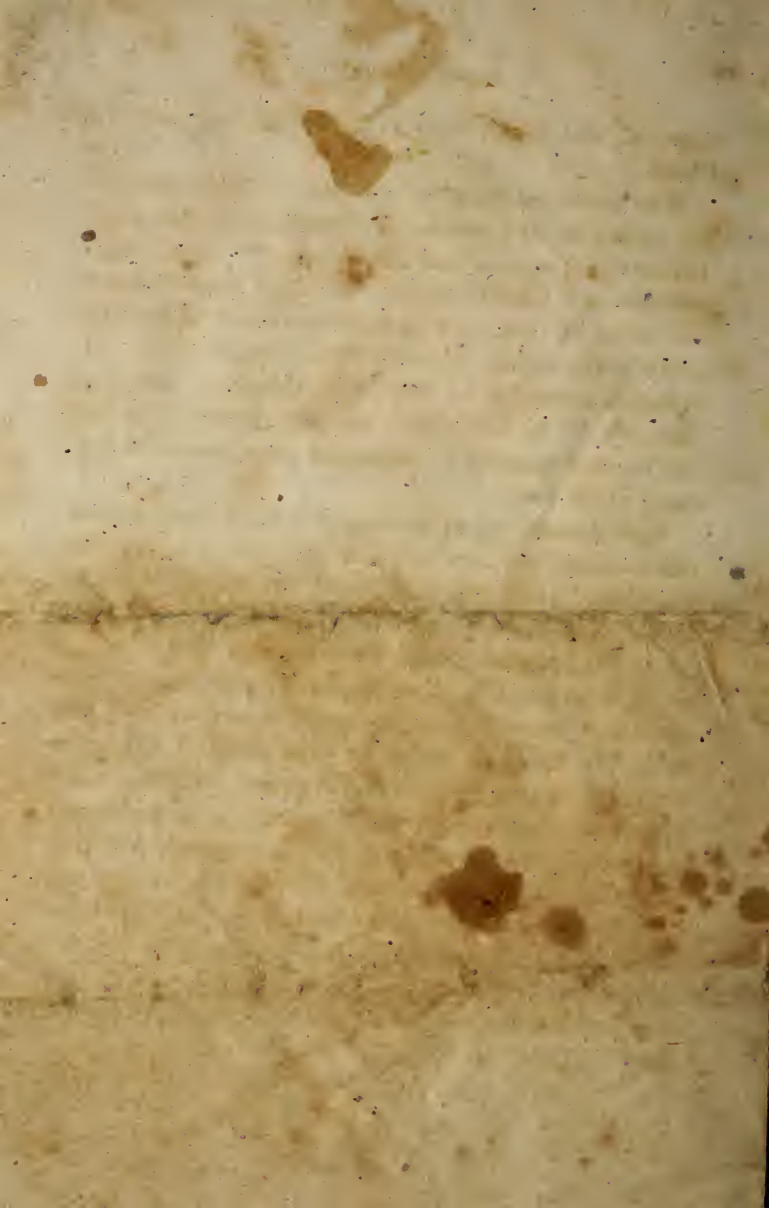
But the Spirit of the Lord, in such a case, continues to flash across the man's mind the joy which would be found in the actual possession of this *treasure*. And further, he fixes his attention more specially than before on the simple terms by which he may obtain all. These terms are—*parting with all you have*. Nothing beyond this. Whatever is *yours*, give it up; account it no more any part of your real treasure. Present yourself *in utter poverty* at Christ's feet, and lo! the *treasure* is yours! Present yourself before Him stripped of whatever you before gloried in, and He immediately gives you *Himself*!

The hand of a believing sinner drops all it had before in order to make room for all that is in Christ. The treasure is for the *poor*—for sinners who have nothing—for souls who sell off all—for such as part with what

they had, and cast it away as dross, that they may win Christ.

Who would not envy the blessedness of this soul now? He finds himself possessed of righteousness and merit, Divine righteousness and Divine merit, Christ's righteousness and Christ's merit. He finds himself rich in the favour of God, and entitled to count as his own every grace which the Holy Spirit has to give. He discovers himself to be heir of all things, in due time (Rev. xx. 7), by being joint-heir with Christ. And all this the first moment he consented to be poor as to anything of his own!

Aged friends, however long you have lived without this treasure, yet now it is within your reach. You have heard of it; you have heard, too, that it is got by the poor, and got in such a way as may ~~kindle hope~~ ^{hope} in you. Had anything, such as strong and lively feeling, or vigorous exertion, been required previously to your making it yours, you might have shaken your head, and said, "It is not for me at my time of life." But you are asked to *part with all that is yours*. The terms are of this strangely simple sort; it is not some enormous amount of *giving* or of *doing* that is required, but it is a parting with what you have. The older you are, you have the more to part with—the more sins, the more prejudices, the more old ideas; but let these go: for believe the Lord's word—"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah lv. 8).



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